

CHOICE COMFORT FOR A YOUNG BELIEVER NO. 1506

*A SERMON
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.*

*"The Lord will perfect that which concerns me: Your mercy,
O Lord, endures forever: forsake not the works of Your own hands."
Psalm 138:8.*

CONTINUALLY I am clearing the ground and laying the foundation of eternal salvation in the grace of God which was manifested in Christ Jesus when He came into the world to save sinners. This I did this morning and the Lord has set His seal thereon right speedily, which is to me a sure proof that the frequent preaching of the foundation truths is according to the mind of God. That necessary work cannot be done too often, for men need to hear the true gospel as often as they hear the striking of the hour and even then they forget it. Yet do not all forget. There are a few, like those who were saved with Noah, who seek the ark of salvation and live. To those who have newly come to put their trust in Jesus I wish to speak this evening and I do so with much delight, for as the sight of the new-born babe makes glad the mother, so does the news of a new-born soul fill me with exceeding joy. Good tidings have come to my ears. We do not often sow and reap quite so quickly as I have done on this occasion, for since this morning's service I have hopeful evidence that God has blessed the Word to many souls and my beloved fellow helpers, who watch around this congregation like scouts around an army, report that the slain of the Lord have been many.

Now, between half-past twelve o'clock this morning and this time in the evening such souls have gone a day's journey towards heaven and already they have begun, I dare say, to question themselves and possibly to be exercised with some few fears. Thus early they may have met with lions in the way or have found worse than real lions in their own fears. They have only lately known the Lord, but already they are growing anxious and looking into the future with a somewhat troubled gaze. Therefore, come we forth lovingly as a shepherd hastens to cherish the newborn lambs. We come to the little ones with words of good cheer, for they need them and we have special orders from our Master to see that they are tenderly comforted. We trust to also speak to those who have known the Lord for many years some words of help with regard to matters which may now be causing them alarm. The consolations of the Lord are very reviving and in number they abound, therefore let small and great partake of them. "Comfort you, comfort you My people, says your God."

When a man becomes a Christian and the grace of God commences its work in his soul, he learns to be serious and thoughtful. That is one of the first noticeable changes in him. He renounces his former carelessness and indifference and becomes a sober, considerate man in whose mind there is a deep concern as to his own character in the sight of God. He is concerned about the temptations he meets with in his walk among the sons of men lest these temptations should be too much for him and he should be betrayed into sin. He longs to lead a holy life. In fact, holiness is his great concern. He prays that he may leave such a life behind him for others to remember as shall be worth their following as an example. He asks himself, "Will the hope I have just obtained really endure to the last days of my life? Will it sustain me amidst the pangs and weaknesses of death? Is it truly such that when I go before the burning throne of God Himself I need not tremble?" Such matters were sport to him once—they are serious questions now. He has thrown down the cap and bells of the jester and taken up the staff of a pilgrim and the sword of a warrior, confessing in an unmistakable manner that "life is real, life is earnest." He is a man of *concern* now, concerned about his soul's affairs, his sins, his life, his death, his eternal salvation. A solemn air is about him—he hears the wheels of eternity sounding in his ears, he girds his loins for his lifework, and he puts away childish things.

This is well, but as every state has its dangers, so the peril of religious *concern* is despondency. Thoughtfulness soon degenerates into distrust and holy anxiety easily rusts into unbelief. The more a man looks within him, the less he can trust himself, and the more a man looks around him, the more he feels that he is in danger and so he is apt very early in his Christian course to be downcast and much afraid and to say within himself, "I shall surely one day fall by the hands of the enemy. My confidence will prove to be a delusion and my conversion a fiction." He is fearful as to the result of future temptations, like a fresh recruit in the battle who feels certain that every boom of the cannon proclaims his death. Now I want, if God will help me, to meet such fears tonight. May the divine Spirit enable us now to have a strong and mighty faith in God, not only with regard to past transgression, which is clean gone through the atoning blood, but with regard to all the difficulties and dangers of the present and future, and may we drink into the spirit of the text which is now before us, "The Lord will perfect that which concerns me: Your mercy, O Lord, endures forever: forsake not the works of Your own hands."

Here first we see that *God fills us with assurance*, "The Lord will perfect that which concerns me." Secondly, *He gives us rest in His mercy*, "Your mercy, O Lord, endures forever." And thirdly, *He puts prayer into our hearts and supplies us with a plea*, "Forsake not the works of Your own hands." May God, the Holy Spirit, most graciously help us in this meditation.

I. At the beginning of our text, to meet our fears about the future, **THE LORD FILLS US WITH ASSURANCE**. "The Lord will perfect that which concerns me." You see the assurance is, first, that *God is really at work on our behalf*. Get a grip of this, you troubled one, and by a personal faith say, "The Lord will perfect that which concerns me." You have come to Jesus and trusted your soul in His hands—we take it for granted that you have done so—then it is certain that the Lord has brought you to this state of mind, for never did a man in this world simply come and trust in Christ unless the Spirit of God had led him to it. What says the Savior? "No man comes unto Me except the Father which has sent Me draw him." You would never have come to a simple reliance upon the mediatorial work and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus if there had not been a work of grace in your soul. Every effect has a cause and all spiritual faith is created in the heart by the Holy Spirit. Since, then, the Lord has begun to save you, your confidence with regard to the future must be that He who began this good work will continue to operate in your soul. If the work of God upon your heart were discontinued, your life, your hope, your faith, your love would be discontinued, too, for you only live because the Holy Spirit lives and works in you. The same power which first made the world and built yonder arch of azure must sustain it still or the world would feel its final crash and the blue dome would utterly dissolve. Continued outgoings of power from the Creator are essential to the continued existence of creation. There is neither power, nor life, nor being apart from God. This is true in the kingdom of grace as much as in that of nature—we are gracious because God gives us grace and we keep His ways because the Lord keeps us by His power unto salvation. The new life within us has been created by the Lord and by Him it must be sustained. Let no one of my hearers forget this. You are to put your reliance upon the working of the eternal power and Godhead within your soul, for there is the fountain of grace and thence the streams must flow. Now mind you, if you base your reliance upon your own perseverance, your own prayerfulness, your own spirituality, your own strength of resolution, or your own settledness of purpose, you will learn that "Cursed is he that trusts in man and makes flesh his arm." For of all the men in the world who are unfit to be trusted, the most unfit one is yourself. It were almost better to trust your fellow man than to trust in yourself. "Trust in the Lord forever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."

I think you will see that the first clause of the text means just this, "*The Lord* will perfect that which concerns me," not, "*I will perfect it myself*," but, "*The Lord will do it*." There is a consciousness that God is at work and the full assurance that *He will still be at work* in order to complete that which He has commenced. Have you obtained a religion which is not the work of God? Then I would exhort you to get rid of it. If your religion shines and glitters and seems to you to be inexpressibly lovely, yet if it has budded out of your own nature or is the result of your own free will and is not traceable to the operation of divine grace, and to divine grace alone, do as the man did with the bad banknote, throw it down on the highway or into a ditch and run away from it. Let no one know that the homemade counterfeit belongs to you. For it is worthless now and it will prove deceptive at the last. But and if the religion you

have received is the work of God, then be certain that He who began the work will perfect it. Be well assured that He who works in you to will and to do of His own good pleasure will always find a pleasure in thus working and will never forsake the work of His own hands.

The psalmist, however, did not merely believe that God was at work and would be at work, but he affirms that He will complete the work. "The Lord will perfect that which concerns me." Has He begun it? Then, my soul, rest sure of this, that He will finish it. Have you ever seen an unfinished work of God? If you had been present on the second or the third day of the week of creation you might have seen a work unfinished. Before the morning stars sang together over a perfect creation, many things were made, but the complete chain of being was not as yet visible. But did the Almighty pause in the middle of the week and leave His design unfinished? How would the record of creation run? That God had made the light but had not made the sun? That He had made the waters, but had not divided them from the land or said to the sea, "Hitherto shall you go, but no farther"? No, the first day of creation was a guarantee of the five which followed it and of the grand rest-day which crowned the week. You might have been certain from that very first day when He said, "Let there be light," that He meant to make eyes to see the light. And when there were living creatures for each domain of nature, beasts of the field, fowl of the air, and fish of the sea, you might be morally certain that He meant to crown the kingdom of nature by bringing forth into it a being to whom He should say, "I have made you to have dominion over the fowl of the air and the fish of the sea and whatsoever passes through the paths of the sea." God's beginnings ensure His endings. He makes no mistake in the plan and feels no weariness in the execution and hence when He puts forth His hand He never draws it back till His work is done. It is always so. Devils of hell and men under their influence no doubt think to stop the path of God in divine providence, but He who can lift the telescope of prophecy and can see the end of the present age, may also hear the ultimate millennial song of, "Hallelujah, hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigns" going up from every hill and dale of this emancipated earth. No machinations of hell or craft of the prince of darkness can ever prevent the Lord from bringing about the consummation of His promise for which His church is daily praying.

Here then, youthful believer, is your confidence—you have begun to be a Christian. God's grace has just changed your heart. You are anxiously asking, "How shall I persevere to the end? How shall I arrive at perfection?" You shall be kept and perfected by the Lord in whom you trust. The same power which commenced a good work in you can complete it and will. Do you doubt it? Think of what is done at the beginning of spiritual life and let this confirm you as to its end. The Holy Spirit raises men from the dead—can He not keep them alive after He has made them alive? He brings His people out of Egypt in the day that they believe—do you think that He who brings them out cannot preserve them in the wilderness till He lands them in Canaan? He has already given us Christ to be the bread of heaven, will He not furnish us with that bread till we shall enter into the purchased possession? Let us rest in confidence. Our Alpha will be our Omega and He will secure every letter which lies between, for it is not His way to lay a foundation without building thereon even to the top stone.

Now, I want you to have this blessed confidence that God is at work and will finish what He has begun and I would have you carry this confidence into everything. You may take it into providence—the Lord will perfect that which concerns you there. Dear friend, you have a plan on hand. You say, "I wish I could be sure that I shall carry it through. Can you tell me?" No, I cannot. I can tell you this, however, that if it really ought to be your purpose, if it is God's plan for you for life, you will carry it through. I have known men, actuated by their own folly, obstinately choose a pursuit for which they were not fit, and in such cases one of the best things that the Lord can do for them is to make them suffer shipwreck and lose their all. It would have been a bad case for our friend Jonah if he had really gone down to Tarshish, for I do not know what he would have done there—he could not have turned sailor, for no crew would have endured so sour a comrade. It was a great mercy for him when he was thrown into the sea and was forced to travel towards Nineveh in the fish's belly. And so sometimes we enter upon a giant scheme of our own inventing, but it is not the Lord's scheme and so it comes to nothing. Like Jehosaphat, we make ships of Tarshish go to Ophir for gold, but they go not, for they are broken at Ezion-gaber as Jehoshaphat's navy was and we complain, perhaps, but it is better to submit, for it comes forth

from the Lord of hosts who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working. He often perfects that which truly concerns us by taking us away from that which never ought to concern us. It may be, dear hearer, that the Lord is dealing thus with you. You have been setting up in business in the direction of your own choice and not of His, so He ends that matter by a heavy loss and you may be very thankful that He does so. But that course of life which you have submitted to His wisdom, which you have taken up in obedience to the plain indications of His providence, which you follow out with integrity, walking before the Lord with all singleness of purpose and committing your way unto Him—that course of life, I say, shall have His blessing and none shall be able to put you on one side. He will perfect, in your case, that which concerns you. The Lord told David that he should be a king. It did not look very likely when he was a lowly shepherd, but since such was the purpose of the Eternal, there was no keeping the son of Jesse off the throne. He is called to court and there Saul's javelin almost makes an end of him. He goes to battle and takes a giant's head and that brings the king's envy upon him. He is hunted like a partridge on the mountains by those who thirsted for his life, *but he must be king*—no Saul or Deog could hinder the divine decree—David must be king. Though he will not lift a hand to smite Saul, yet must his persecutor vacate the royal seat for him. Judah shall acknowledge him, but half a crown shall not be enough, speedily shall Israel submit to him. The Lord must perfect that which concerns him and make him king over the whole nation and establish the throne to his seed after him. Now, my brother, if the Lord has called you to the work of the ministry, the devil cannot shut the mouth that God opens. If He has called you to any post of honor or difficulty in His church or for His cause, you will arrive at it and your hands shall be sufficient for you. Whatever may stand in the way, the Lord will carry you through and perfect that which concerns you. Rest you sure of that. "If I thought so," says one, "I should be much more quiet than I am." Think so, my brother, and be quiet. "Oh, but I should feel more confidence." Have confidence, brother. Perhaps that very confidence will be the means to the end and help you to succeed. "Such assurance would make me more patient and I should not put out my hand so hastily if I knew that what I am hoping for would come in due time." Do not put out your hand hastily, brother. Keep back just as David did when there was Saul lying before him sound asleep and his spear was ready for fatal use. Then his friend said to him, "Let me smite him but this once." It could have been done in an instant and the crown would have been gained by a single stroke. But David did not take the business into his own hands—he would leave matters with God.

Though a sin may seem to be the straight line which leads to an end, yet be sure of this, that it is always the longest way. The nearest way to be a gainer forever is to be a loser for the present for conscience sake, while the road to failure and to shame is found in the tempting path of hastening to be rich. Be sure that it is no business of yours to perfect that which concerns you in providence. God has promised to do it and only presumption will dare to interfere. "Stand still and see the salvation of God" is often the wisest policy as well as the truest heroism. Take care that you put not forth an unbelieving hand to snatch the unripe fruit from the tree. Wait, and in patience possess your soul.

But this, dear friends, is more especially true in the work of grace in the heart. In that case the Lord will perfect that which concerns you. You have only a little faith. It looks like a spark and scarcely can be called a flame, but it will increase until it burns aloft like a beacon fire. The Lord will give you an Abrahamic faith if you will wait upon Him for it and exercise what faith you already possess. Trust Him, trust Him with your faith. Trust Him with your trust. You have a little love and you sigh to be altogether taken up with affection for your Lord—such affection shall be worked in you before long—even that "perfect love, which casts out fear." Trust God with your love and the God of love will reveal Himself in you till your whole soul is saturated with gratitude. You have some little of the likeness of Christ already. Walk before the Lord in all confidence and He will sketch the image of Christ upon your character to perfection and you shall become so manifestly Christly that men shall know you to be Christ's disciple by your very speech. You are a long way from being perfect yet, you say. Ah, but you shall be perfect—the Lord will perfect that which concerns you. Will you know yourself, brother, when you are made perfect? I do not expect to see you coming up these aisles when you have reached that point, for another and better assembly will claim you and gain you. If at some future period of your sojourn here I should hear you say, "I am perfect," I shall know better at once, for you will prove your pride by your

silly bragging. Yet you will one day be completely holy and spotlessly pure. You and I and all those who trust in Christ shall be perfect—every sin cast out, every virtue brought to harmonious completeness. We shall be holy as our Father in heaven. “Oh,” says one, “that is the best news I ever heard. Shall I be perfect?” Yes, as surely as you are in the perfect Christ so surely shall you be perfect with Him. We shall be holy, unblameable, and unreprovable in His sight in the day of His appearing. Even while we are here, we are struggling after perfectness—this is the goal to which we run—this is the target at which we aim. That we may perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord and be sanctified spirit, soul, and body is the high ambition of our lives. Let us never despair of it, for there stands the promise, “The Lord will perfect that which concerns me.”

Now, if this is true in providence and true of the work of grace in us, it is also true of the work of grace all around us. How often do I go before the Lord with the weight of this church and all its institutions upon me and I cry from my heart, “What will come of them all?” Then it is my confidence and delight that the Lord will perfect that which concerns me. Hitherto He has helped me in a marvelous manner and why should I fancy that He will forsake me, seeing that with all my heart I desire to honor Him? Only have trust in God, you who live for the glory of Christ and as your day your strength shall be. You shall go forth conquering and to conquer if your sword is drawn alone in Christ’s quarrel. If your charge is but a few children in the Sunday school, or if it is the raising of a cause for Christ in a hamlet or a village, only give your whole soul to it and rest in God and you shall find Him perfecting that which concerns you. Why, we have not half the confidence in God about our religious efforts that we ought to have. We go to work with a faint heart and tremblingly hope that perhaps we shall succeed. Look how amazed we are when we find a soul converted here and there, and what a noise we make over a solitary convert, like a hen that has laid a single egg and must tell all the world about it. If we had more confidence in God, we should expect converts by the hundreds and we should have them. We should go to work with the great weapon of the gospel which God has put into our hands and with the power which God has promised, we would see the kingdom given unto Messiah and the pleasure of the Lord would prosper in His hands. May we have faith enough to be certain that our unchanging God will perfect that which concerns us. So I leave that first part, trusting that our hearts may be filled with quiet assurance by the Holy Spirit.

II. And now, secondly and very briefly, THE LORD GIVES US REST IN HIS MERCY, for what says the text, “Your mercy, O Lord, endures forever.” See, my brethren, how this works in us rest from fear? “Alas!” sighs one troubled heart, “I fear I shall fall into many sins between here and heaven.” Well may you have that dread, my brother. But you may readily overcome the fear by singing in your heart, “Your mercy, O Lord, endures forever.” The blood of atonement will never fail and therefore mercy will always endure. “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”—

*“Dear dying Lamb, Your precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed church of God
Is saved to sin no more.”*

Your sins between here and heaven shall be forgiven you, so let the dread of condemnation be banished.

Then comes up another fear—“But I do not see how I am to be perfected. My nature is so vile. I find such resistance to the divine operations. The flesh struggles against the Spirit and I cannot get my rebellious flesh to be subject to the law of God.” The answer to this distressing lament is the same as in the former case, “His mercy endures forever.” He will bear with you and forbear beyond all bounds. None but a God could have patience with you, but the Lord is God and not man. Some of God’s children are the most crooked people that ever were in this world and it must be sovereignty which chose them, for they are by no means naturally desirable or attractive. It was hard work even for a Moses to have patience with them of old. Though he was the meekest of men, yet his anger waxed hot against them and he said, “Hear now, you rebels,” but their God had no such angry word for them, He was still patient and bore with them for forty years. Brother, sister, He will have patience with you because His mercy endures forever. He has been teaching you faith, but how slowly you have learned! There is a man who has been learning faith these five-and-twenty years and he is an unbeliever still at times. Doubts frequently

mar the face of his assurance, but the Lord still bears with his unbelief and goes on to teach him little by little, line upon line, precept upon precept. There is one here who has been taught love. Ay, for the past forty years that brother has been learning love to the Lord and love to the brethren, spelling out the lessons of love letter by letter. He is in the infant class even now, but the Lord is having a deal of patience with him and He will yet make him tender, considerate, and affectionate. Let us hope it will be soon, for his own sake, and still more for the sake of his brethren to whom he acts so roughly. Many of God's people are very slow learners—they have been at school these twenty years and cannot yet read their own titles to eternal mansions, though penned in capitals by their Redeemer's own hand. As for myself, I am more brutish than any man and other teachers would long ago have lost patience with me, but "the Lord will perfect that which concerns me, for His mercy endures forever."

Between now and heaven, dear brethren, some of you will perhaps have to pass through a great deal of affliction and some of us who are called daily to see others suffer feel much tenderness towards those who are the children of affliction and therefore we speak with great sympathy when we say, "Do not shudder with regard to those pains and tremors which may come over your poor trembling frame, for His mercy endures forever. He will make your bed in your sickness and underneath you shall be the everlasting arms."

Between here and heaven perhaps you will experience a great many needs. It may be you have been afraid of poverty. You have not a very large sum of money in the bank and you have not a very large sum in your pocket either, and sometimes you are out of work and you hardly know what you shall eat or what you shall drink—be this your comfort—"His mercy endures forever." "Having food and raiment let us be content, for He has said, I will never leave you nor forsake you." All the streams may dry, but the brook Cherith will flow on and even if that chosen rivulet should fail, behold God has a widow woman at Zarephath who will feed you. Though she has nothing herself but a handful of meal and a little oil in the cruse, yet you shall both live upon it till the famine is over. The heir of heaven shall not lack for the bread of earth while God lives, for it is written, "Trust in the Lord and do good; so shall you dwell in the land and verily you shall be fed." "He gives food unto all flesh, for His mercy endures forever." "Your bread shall be given you."

At last, unless the Lord should suddenly appear, there will come the hour of death which by many is exceedingly dreaded. You will gather up your feet in the bed and bid adieu to all temporal things and then the enduring mercy of God shall be your abounding consolation. A large part of our fears about death are idle. One man of God always feared death, but he might have spared himself his wretchedness, for he fell asleep one night in apparently excellent health and died in his sleep. He never could have known anything about dying, for on his face were no tokens of pain or struggle, nor was there any reason to believe that he ever awoke till he lifted up his eyes amid the cherubim. Beloved, if we die awake and even if we die in pain, we shall yet hope to die triumphantly. If we do not die shouting victory, we hope that we shall peacefully fall asleep—the Lord Himself kissing away our soul into the eternity of joy, "for His mercy endures forever." "He will perfect that which concerns me."

Now, I want you young friends, especially who are just beginning life, each one to feel, "Now, I am going to put myself and all my temporal circumstances, all my fears, all my engagements, my living, my dying, everything into the hand of God and there I am going to leave it. I will trust Him with my all. In the beginning I will trust Him and I will do so even to the end and go my way with this calm confidence, 'He will perfect that which concerns me, for His mercy endures forever.'" I remember hearing one of our evangelists once say that some Christian people, when they first profess to be Christians, are like a man who is going a long distance by rail, but only takes a ticket for a short distance and then he has to get out and make a rush for new tickets as he goes along. "Now," said he, "there are other believers who know better and take a ticket all the way through at the first, which is by far the wiser way." Some trust the Lord to keep them for a quarter of a year and others for a month, but when I believed in Christ Jesus, I thank His name, I trusted Him to save me to the end. I sought for and obtained a finished salvation, which is my joy and hope at this moment. I took a ticket all the way through and I have not had to get a fresh ticket yet. I have sometimes thought I should, but when I have run to the office, they have handed me back my old ticket, the one I lost, the same one as before, and I knew it to be the same, for it bore

this stamp upon it, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved." The believer is saved at first by believing and he shall be so to the last. Do not trust a rickety salvation which may break down with you—a temporary, trumpery salvation which may only last you for a time and then fail—to embrace with all your heart that divine promise, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." Cry out after the living water which shall be in you as a well of water springing up unto everlasting life and suck the marrow out of this text, "He that believes in Me has"—has then and there, down on the nail—"has"—now, today, "has everlasting life"—not life for a time, but life everlasting as surely as he believes in Christ.

III. This brings me to conclude with the third clause of our text which is a prayer. The Lord, having given His people grace to rest in His mercy, He PUTS IT INTO THEIR HEARTS TO PRAY AND SUPPLIES THEM WITH A PLEA, "Forsake not the works of Your own hands."

To my mind, it is a very touching prayer. "Lord, You have begun the work upon me, go on to finish it, for if You do not, it will never be finished. If You leave it, it is left undone and I am undone indeed. But do not forsake the work of Your own hands." It is such a prayer as the clay might put up when it is revolving on the potter's wheel. The potter is using his best skill and producing an article of great beauty, bringing out its shape and form as it spins round before him. Already you can see something of what it will be—the design does not yet perfectly appear, but you can guess it. But suppose the potter were to stop the wheel, take up the clay and fling it back again into the lump, that vessel would never be finished, for it cannot finish itself. It has no power to shape itself in any degree and so if it were rational clay and could speak, it would say, "Forsake not the work of your own hands. Persevere in what you have begun." This is a prayer which you and I may well bring before God, whose workmanship we are. "O God, if I have only a little faith, yet You gave it to me. Oh, give me more. If You have given me only a desire after You, yet that desire is a divine creation. Have respect unto it, I pray You, and fulfill it." This is a powerful argument with our gracious God, for, brethren, He does not give you a little grace to tantalize you. Now He has given you a hunger and thirst after Him, suppose He does not satisfy you? That hunger and that thirst will be cruel gifts. He has taken away from you the power to be happy in the world, has He not? Well, if He does not intend to give you His own divine happiness, why has He made you weary of the world and the pleasures of sin? A dog likes bones and I am sure I would not teach him to leave his bones or turn him into a man if afterwards I had to say, "Now you have become a man, there is nothing for you. If you want a meal you must try the bones again." No, no. He who makes us hate the world means to give us something better. He who makes us loathe sin means to cleanse us from it. He who begins to build in our souls is not a foolish builder of whom it shall be said, "This man began to build, but was not able to finish." Do you think, brother, that the Lord has found out something in you which is so bad that it baffles Him and compels Him to give up His work? If it were so, why did He ever begin it? He knew what would be in you. The prescient eye of God foresaw every sin and every tendency to sin in the heart of every man that lives and so when He began His work He knew all that it would require to perfect it. He has not gone forth to fight the devil in you to discover that He is not strong enough to meet him. Oh, no, He knows the force of your evil nature, the force of your hasty temper, the force of that obstinate self-love, the force of that imperious pride, the force of that dogged will—He knows all this, nor can anything take Him by surprise and therefore since He has begun to save you, rest assured that He will accomplish His design. His hand is not shortened, nor His heart dismayed. You may cry to Him out of the utmost depths and be quite assured that He can and will even there carry on His purposes of love, for He will not forsake the work of His own hands.

Go to Him, then, in prayer. Plead with Him mightily. Prayer is the channel appointed to convey to you the blessing. Open the valves and let the stream flow into your heart. Whenever you feel as if you must be broken in pieces like a poor earthen pot, then cry to Him, "Lord, forsake not the work of Your own hands. Oh, do not leave me, for I bear the print of Your hand. Be patient with this ill-worked clay and work upon me till You shall have made me a vessel unto honor fit for Your own special use."

In summary, the closing word is just this. I have often preached to you salvation to sinners, as sinners, just as you are and I have bid you, in my Master's name, come and receive that free mercy which He presents to the guilty, even to the guiltiest of all, when they will but take it and trust in His dear name. Now, I supplement that by advising you to carry the rule of faith into every part of your life. Trust

the Lord Jesus for everything. Do not come tonight to trust in Christ half way, but for all things commit yourself into His eternal keeping, for He is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before His presence with exceeding great joy. If you believers have been trusting the divine Lord to keep you if you keeping yourselves, get beyond that and trust in Him to keep you that you may keep yourselves. If you have said, "I believe that He will be faithful to me if I am faithful to Him," go much farther, for it will never do to stop there. Trust in Him to make you faithful to Him. Do not suffer the pivot to rest in you—put the whole stress and burden upon the Lord Jesus. If you retain any, "if," or "but," about your eternal salvation, it will be a thorn in your pillow and a serpent at your heel. If you are the cornerstone and mainstay of your own salvation, you are a lost man. You must hang upon the sure nail, Christ Jesus, all the burden and all the glory of His Father's house. As for depending on your own watchfulness or constancy or anything else of your own, I want you to get right away from it and now, once for all, by an act which you shall rejoice in as long as you live, commit your whole future—time and eternity—into the pierced hand of Him who says that He gives to His sheep eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of His hand. In this one thing I would have you be as I am, for I have no shade of hope apart from the Lord Jesus, either as to my pardon or my perseverance, my new birth or my ultimate perfection. I need to know what is to become of me in death and what is to become of me when I live again in eternity, and if I could not have a far-reaching faith which flung itself across the awful gulf that separates this world from the next, my religion would yield me but small comfort.

But now tonight—and may everybody here be enabled to do so—I do put my whole self, my soul, my body, my engagements, my prospective sufferings, my future troubles, my labors—everything which has to do with me or about me into those same hand which bought me when they was nailed to the tree. He shall keep me or I shall never be kept. Once for all I make a deposit of my eternal interests and leave them with Him whose honor it is to keep safely that which is committed to Him. He is able to preserve me and I have done with it. I hand over my all to Him. Come, my brethren, do the same and when you have done so be of good cheer. A man takes his money into his bank and leaves it. He does not go back in a quarter of an hour and say, "Mr. Cashier, have you my money safely?" "Yes, sir." "Well I want to see it." They would not want such a man to deal with their bank long, for he has no confidence and will be more trouble than profit. Put in your all with Jesus and leave it there. Make a permanent investment. Draw the interest of it and spend it in present enjoyment, but leave your all as a permanent investment and sing with me—

*"I know that safe with Him remains,
Protected by His power,
What I've committed to His hands
Till the decisive hour.
Then will He own my worthless name
Before His Father's face,
And in the New Jerusalem
Appoint my soul a place."*

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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